Title: Twitter TV ratings analysis as a new approach to TV Audience Research

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Abstract

Broadcast television cannot take its audience for granted (Ang, 1991). Day after day it needs to ensure that people watch their programs and key metrics are needed to measure television audience behaviour. TV audience ratings measurement is an established system for measuring the popularity of TV shows. The system is recognized by all market segments and has been used for decades. Both academia and the industry are aware of the need for more in-depth research, stressing that this is necessary to be able to better understand TV audiences, as TV ratings measurement provides only an incomplete picture of the TV audience. TV audiences have started to use social networks to comment on their viewing experiences: they discuss TV shows on Twitter, they make comments and share their opinions. The numbers of comments related to TV events can be high and the amount of available data through Twitter API can provide reliable insights into TV audience behaviour. Traditional TV audience measurement provides no insights into the viewers' opinions and can only be assumed that they devoted their full attention to the TV show. Tracking the Twitter activity surrounding a TV show (Harrington, Highfield&Bruns, 2013; Züll & Mikelic Preradovic, 2013) can therefore provide information about the audience's reactions. Twitter analysis is increasingly valued by the TV industry and TV audience research companies, such as Nielsen and GFK, have announced and already partly implemented a Twitter TV ratings system as a supplement to their traditional TV ratings measurement. The new Twitter ratings system will produce new data and shall be used as a new complementary metric by the TV industry.

The traditional TV ratings measurement is recognised for representing the population of TV households. The analysis of Twitter data submits information about the Twitter population, only taking into account TV viewers who tweet. Locating communication about TV programs on Twitter is much more complex and is far from being automated. Developing appropriate methodology is still the main challenge for tracking Twitter activity. Defining and locating #hashtags and keywords to identify TV audience communication (and therefore representativeness of retrieved data) cannot be expected. In addition comments tweeted by TV

channels themselves as part of their promotion activities bias the results. The aim of this research is to explore the methodology and validity of Twitter TV ratings as new metric for the TV industry.

Title: Social media and the commonification of TV criticism.

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Abstract

This paper investigates the way that social media have given a renewed impetus to TV criticism. Websites like Entertainment Weekly or TVline.com not only offer TV criticism by TV critics but they also offer ample opportunity for fans to debate their favorite TV shows, part of what Graeme Turner has called "the demotic turn" in contemporary media. Whereas academic scrutiny of this demotic turn has tended to focus on the issue of democratization and the valorization of subjugated knowledges, relatively little attention has been given to how this has affected taste cultures. Through a detailed analysis of audience reactions to The Walking Dead this paper argues that we see a proto-professionalization of TV criticism, with audience members offering increasingly sophisticated analyses of TV shows. But contrary to the "subjugated knowledges" thesis we witness a hybrid form of popular critique, that is as much informed by standards set by the culture industry as it is by other standards. The paper ends with a discussion on what this means for the new cultural commons that is emerging, and the type of cultural knowledge that it produces.

Title: Manual and semi-automated user-generated content selection and integration in radio-mediated environments

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Abstract

In the past decade, users have been encouraged to participate via various outlets – texting, Facebook, Twitter, resulting in increased amounts of interpersonal content but also content submitted to mass media outlets. This poses challenges to content collocation and meaningful integration. Due to increased numbers of contents, in addition to manual ways to select contents, some parts of the content selection integration are entrusted to automated technological applications. This study analyzes manual and automated sides of content selection and integration practices in a commercial Italian hit radiovision station RTL 102.5 relying on gatekeeping as a theoretical framework and its implications to content selection.

Automated agents and tools in large-content contexts have been extensively used to facilitate various mechanical tasks. Robots (bots) can be dated back to Internet Relay Chat. Wikipedia contributors extensively deployed bots to clean, protect, and revert content (Niederer and van Dijck, 2010; Linvingstone, 2014). Yet, automated part of content management of user participation is underexplored in mass media settings, notwithstanding some exceptions (Enli, 2007). Given the rise of social media, what are the challenges related to content production in user participation-based programming? How does content integration process shape gatekeeping for media producers in a technology automated content processing environments?

The study was based on a multi-method approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with media producers to map the process of content integration. Participant observation was conducted to assess the practices associated with the content selection. Text messages via mobile phones and Facebook sent to this radio-TV program were analyzed in terms of proportion of selected content and content flows over time.

The study revealed that the initial screening of incoming user messages is conducted by media technicians who made decisions regarding content selection. Results showed that only around 30% of user messages get selected for the programming (out of roughly 400,000 messages, over a four months period). Yet, once messages were manually selected, the subsequent level involved software-based messages aggregation and subsequent collocation

within the programming. Instead of tailoring individual user contents to predefined contexts, messages' integration was challenging because of the lack of control associated with the content allocation. This also poses challenges regarding the meaningfulness and the value of user-generated content to the user experience. The semi-automated part of content integration opens the debate on the challenges in increased value creation through user-generated content and questions the gatekeeping process as a human-based decision making outcome from theoretical perspective.

Title: Participatory Media and the Digital Commons: The Social Archiving of Intangible Heritage

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Abstract

This paper examines how YouTube's potential to safeguard heritage produces a paradoxical heritage archive with competing ends. YouTube's global and public access enables the archiving of divergent representations of heritage, fostering greater democratic representation through social media. YouTube is forging a public archive of heritage that facilitates the dissemination of cultural diversity. At the same time, the public archive that is burgeoning on YouTube thrives on a platform that is designed to monetize the labour and communication of its users through the personalization of media. This personalization is structured to capture the perceived private media consumptions of individual users to reap corporate profits.

The dissemination of democratic cultural representation on a commercial platform is explored through the transmission of intangible heritage videos on YouTube. These videos can potentially counter official gendered narratives proposed by nation-states through UNESCO. This questioning of official heritage emerges because YouTube archives videos of intangible heritage uploaded by UNESCO as well as other institutions, individuals, and communities. The storing of UNESCO and user-generated videos is creating informal and dynamic archives that are constantly shifting in accordance with user-generated content and algorithms. Social archiving can call into question the UNESCO-sanctioned narratives of intangible heritage advanced by national governments through stories transmitted in user-generated videos, metadata and posted texts. This archiving can further challenge national heritage stories by positioning specific videos on fluid lists assembled by search engines through algorithms and user-generated input. YouTube's capacity to counteract UNESCO-supported narratives nevertheless yields to the politics of code. This platform is under the authority of algorithms and policies that Google designs and upgrades to convert the labour and social interaction of YouTube users into corporate profits. The archiving of intangible heritage via new technologies is approached through the case study of the Mevlevi Sema (or whirling dervish) Ceremony of Turkey. Through the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, UNESCO promotes the Ceremony as practice that is only performed by men.

However, YouTube features videos of the religious performances of a contemporary Mevlevi community in Istanbul where women dervishes whirl alongside their male counterparts in public ceremonies. This research combines performance studies, critical heritage studies, new media, digital humanities and software studies with historical analysis of specific performing arts. Theoretical and historical approaches are interconnected with actual ethnographies of heritage communities, interviews with UNESCO heritage practitioners, virtual ethnographies of YouTube videos and analyses of search engines lists of YouTube heritage videos.

Title: The Politics of Content Aggregation

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Abstract

While digital media scholarship has critically analysed the political use of metaphors in building the Internet (e.g. Gillespie 2010), exploitative forms of digital labor or issues of media ownership (Scholz 2013), considerably less attention has been paid to the role played by new intermediaries in the delivery of cultural content. Dinah Iordanova (2012) has claimed that digital technology has radically challenged traditional distribution models; with digital, our access to media culture is supposed to have become more open and inclusive. Her work adds to a wide-spread notion that with the digital transformation, producers and consumers of media have come to benefit from a process of "disintermediation", that is, from the cutting out of traditional middlemen such as commercial film distributors. Online delivery thus is seen to expand the circulation of independent, alternative, and noncommercial cultural forms. Such visions, however, are seldomly met by empirical evidence, and the purpose of this paper is to critically examine the role played by new intermediaries in the field of content aggregation. Situating content aggregators within a larger and rapidly changing media ecology that includes different forms of content, services, service providers, physical transportation networks and consumer media ecosystems, my talk will specifically compare online aggregators for music and video, such as Tunecore (for Spotify) and Under the Milky Way (for iTunes), in order to identify what appears as a new form of "re-intermediation" rather than disintermediation.

The research presented in this paper is part of an ongoing, collaborative research project entitled "Streaming Heritage: Following Files in Digital Music Distribution", funded by the Swedish Research Council (2014-2018). In accordance with the idea of "following the thing" (George Marcus), the overall idea of this project is to study digital distribution by following digital files rather than those making, using, or collecting them. The sub-study I am currently conducting aims to deliver a "lifespan tracking" of cultural content (online video, as delivered via on demand streaming services to multiple devices) and is based on direct access to the internal analytics of selected VOD providers and on interviews with various market actors such as Google, Netflix, Warner Bros, but even more specialized content aggregators like Under the Milky Way, and in addition, with the European Commission/Creative Europe

and major Internet Exchange Points such as Netnod (Sweden) in order to provide a holistic view on the partly (algorithmically) "black-boxed", partly publicly discernible politics of content aggregation.